

Hello everyone! And welcome to our Wednesday Word devotion for today, March 10, 2021. Thank you so much for tuning in, and for taking this time out of your day to focus on God and focus on your faith.

Part of what I love about the Lenten spiritual journey is how much I tend to grow and notice things differently than I do in times of the year when I'm perhaps not as intentional about my spiritual practices. Yes, intention about spiritual practices can sometimes ebb and flow, even for us pastors. One of my practices has been reading through prayers written by some of my favorite theologians and authors, and one book particularly, "A Rhythm of Prayer" edited by Sarah Bessey has really spoken to me in this challenging time. And in reading and praying these prayers, my understanding of who God is (and perhaps is not) has grown and filled me with a new curiosity. I'm putting new language to who God is and what God does, and I'd love for you to explore that a bit as well in today's devotion.

So I'm going to read two shorter pieces of scripture today, followed by a couple of questions for reflection and meditation, and end in a word of prayer.

Our first Scripture verses today come from Luke 13:32-35

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

And our second set of Scripture verses comes from Psalm 57:1-3:

*Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,
for in you my soul takes refuge;
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,
until the destroying storms pass by.
I cry to God Most High,
to God who fulfills his purpose for me.
He will send from heaven and save me,
he will put to shame those who trample on me. Selah
God will send forth his steadfast love and his faithfulness.*

As you hear these scriptures and come into a time of prayer: what does being in the embrace of God's wings, like a mother hen, feel like for you? Does God as a mother figure (as well as a father) comfort or challenge you?

And now please join me in a word of prayer:

Lord God, creator of all things, we give you thanks for all the ways you hold us, guide us, and love us. You are fully other than us and yet know us so deeply, knitting us together in our inmost parts, and we need never fear you, O God. Draw us closer in your embrace. Help us to trust that your works and presence and love are truly good. Save us from the sinful things that would separate us from you and help us to lean into our belovedness. As we remember Jesus' time in the wilderness, guide us in our moments of wilderness too. Help us to know you are always the safe place for us to land, the bread of life that sustains us, and the giver of life-saving embrace, by the power of your Spirit, in every time and place. In the name of your beloved son Jesus we pray, Amen.

Go in peace, dear friends, have a blessed rest of your day. Amen.